

MORE THAN PLEASANT, MORE THAN DELIGHTFUL

I write this in the risk-taking spirit which this newsletter is partly intended to foster, in the hope that it may set others' ideas flowing. As a musicologist whose public appearance encompasses two more-or-less accepted areas: the analysis of recent 'difficult' music (the subject of my thesis) and writings on rock music (a book and various articles); I have recently begun trying to justify to myself the intense pleasure I have gained through participating in those musically low-grade events called, in folk club circles, 'singarounds' or 'come-all-yes' (as in the plural of 'come-all-ye!'). These are the occasions when everyone, no matter who, takes their turn to sing (often in a cold, bare room above a pub), frequently unaccompanied, frequently a chorus song, frequently with questionable tuning, timing and memory. My self-investigation is prompted by the realization that conventional explanations in terms of 'community', or Christopher Small's 'temporary creation of an ideal society' are woefully inadequate for these musical experiences, for my pleasure on such occasions is, at the least, intensely musical (although it is, also, communal). I want to explore this simply through consideration of one song, a song of leavetaking between a sailor and his love, commonly known as 'Pleasant and delightful'. This song is so widely known that it is usually only sung by inexperienced, 'beginner' singers, and seems to have been virtually 'banned' in some clubs. In trying to explore my own musical pleasure in this simple song, I have come to the conclusion that it is, at root, physical. I also have a growing suspicion that other musical pleasures have a far greater physical component than is normally admitted, and it is for this reason that I pursue the issue here.

According to Bert Lloyd (p.202), the song was 'ubiquitous' by the time Sharp, Broadwood and Kidson made their collections. I have not traced its subsequent history, but a widely-known version of it entered the club repertoire through the singing of the Shropshire farmworker Fred Jordan. It was commercially recorded by Shirley and Dolly Collins on the album *Anthems in Eden* in 1969 (with acknowledgement to Jordan), and it was certainly widely known when I began frequenting the clubs in the early 1970s. The song normally has about four verses: ex. 1 transcribes an entire first verse of the song, the melody from memory, the lyric from Shirley Collins' recording (I have an appalling memory for lyrics, and have never bothered to learn the song itself). That part preceding the asterisk is sung by the solo singer, the 'audience' joining in at the asterisk. This latter part acts as a refrain, although the words are always taken from the last line of the verse. It is, of course, only this portion which interests me here.

In ex.2, I have suggested an analysis of these last four phrases of the melody. Its key intervalliq features are the falling third and

